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Letter dated 18 August 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am writing to you regarding the letter of Mr. Mate Granić of 14 August 1995 (A/50/354-S/1995/696, annex).

The said letter represents the height of cynicism of the policy pursued by Croatia. At a time when the Croatian authorities have resorted to the cruellest means - massive armed aggression - with a view to realizing the basic premise of their policy, that is, the creation of the ethnically pure State, Mr. Granić is attempting to divert the attention of the international community away from the humanitarian catastrophe and tragedy of the Krajina Serbs who have been forced to flee their ancestral homes.

Even before Croatia's latest aggression, some 350,000 Serbs had been expelled from Croatia. Those who remained have been subjected to extreme harassment, forcible conversion to the Catholic faith, lay-offs and eviction, just for being Serbs.

So far, 220,000 Serbs, almost the entire population of parts of the Krajina, have fled the area since Croatia's latest aggression.

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* A/50/150.

According to the data of the Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, since the onset of the Croatian attacks on the Krajina on 4 August 1995 until 17 August, 151,934 Serb refugees were registered in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is estimated that this number will reach 200,000, at least 25 per cent of whom are children. A large number of Serb refugees also found shelter in the Republic of Srpska: in the area of Banja Luka alone, 30,000 refugees remained and it is anticipated that 10,000 to 15,000 more refugees are still to come.

Despite Croatia's attempts to obscure all traces of the horrendous and massive crimes committed against the Krajina Serbs, the truth is nevertheless starting to prevail.

Following the massive crimes in western Slavonia in May 1995 committed by the Croatian forces, which resulted in territory cleansed of Serbs, Croatia is now resorting to the same method in the Krajina, namely, the media and international humanitarian organizations and the United Nations representative are denied access to the area before all incriminating traces are removed. However, even according to sparse reports of the relevant organizations, including the United Nations, it is more than evident that the atrocities of the Croatian army were abundant - indiscriminate shelling of columns of refugees, total destruction of entire Serb villages, looting and gross violations of human rights. The United Nations representative today said that certain evidence indicated the possibility of mass graves in Knin, Vrlika and other places.

The accounts of the surviving Serb refugees are appalling. They bear witness to a large number of mass murders, particularly in the area of Topusko and Dvor. Especially telling are the pictures of the fleeing Serbs being brutally humiliated and attacked by the Croats in Sisak despite the presence of Croatian authorities and in full view of representatives of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The fate of the column of 10,000 refugees from Topusko, which was allowed by the Croatian authorities to leave for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is still unknown since 10 August 1995.

The terror of the Croatian authorities against the Serb people in the Krajina is an obvious proof that the declared readiness of Croatian officials to ensure a "normal life" for all Serbs who decide to stay in Croatia was a sham designed to offset the criticism of the international community.

Mr. Granić's allegations to the effect that "the Croatian ethnic community is being subjected to 'ethnic cleansing'" in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, are absolutely untrue and utterly malicious. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as a multi-ethnic State where over 30 per cent of the population are members of national minorities, provides under its Constitution for full equality of its citizens regardless of their nationality, religion or political affiliation, in full accordance with the relevant international conventions acceded to by Yugoslavia.

In the final analysis, what is the moral integrity of a regime that is obviously continuing its policy of genocide against the Serb people, that 50 years ago executed 700,000 in concentration camps and in the past 4 years has killed and expelled over half a million of them?

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (c) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.